
To prevent and treat disease and disability; to promote healthy lifestyles; and to protect and promote the health and quality of our environment.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Public Health Alert
Central District Health Department
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RABID BAT FOUND IN NORTHWEST BOISE NEIGHBORHOOD

On Wednesday morning, September 5th, a live bat was found on the sidewalk in the 4700 block of Samara Street in northwest Boise. That section of Samara Street is east of Collister Street in the neighborhood of Collister Elementary School. **The bat has tested positive for rabies.** This is the second rabid bat reported in the Boise area in the last two weeks. The first bat was found in the Robie Creek area.

It is unknown how long the bat may have been on the ground, how far it may have crawled before it was found, and whether any pet or human came in contact with it. Many children use Samara Street to get to school. **Parents whose children used Samara Street to get to school on Wednesday, September 5th should find out if their child or children saw the bat, what they did when they saw the bat, and who might have been with them. It is especially important to find out if any child or adult had any contact whatsoever with the bat such as touching it, kicking it, or poking it with a stick.**

The rabies virus can be passed to a human by the bite or scratch of a rabid animal. Rabies can also be passed in the saliva of an infected animal if the saliva comes in contact with the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, or mouth.

Any child or adult who handled the bat or was exposed to its saliva is at risk for rabies. If untreated, rabies is always fatal. Rabies in humans can be prevented by timely administration of Human Rabies Immune Globulin (HRIG) and rabies vaccine. Parents with children who were exposed to the bat should contact their family physician to discuss receiving rabies prophylaxis. Human Rabies Immune Globulin is only available through hospital emergency rooms. Central District Health Department does not provide post-exposure rabies treatment.

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has an interactive website which parents and children can access together to learn more about rabies. The address is **www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies**. Select the “Kids Rabies Home Page” button.

Any unvaccinated dog, cat, or other mammal exposed to the bat could become infected with rabies. Pet owners should review their pets' vaccination records to be sure that their pets' rabies vaccinations are up to date. Residents who aren't sure of their pets' vaccination status should contact their veterinarian.

To date, fourteen rabid bats have been identified in Idaho in 2001. Two of the bats were found in Health District 4. In a normal year approximately 120 bats are submitted to the Idaho State Bureau of Laboratories for rabies testing. So far this year, 148 bats have been tested. On average, about 10% of all bats tested for rabies in Idaho are positive for the rabies virus.

Questions can be directed to the Epidemiology and Surveillance Program at Central District Health Department in Boise at 327-8506.

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